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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of knowledge management networks in the pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration

Summary

As decided by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) at its forty-fifth session, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted a thematic evaluation of "Knowledge management networks in the pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration". The report assesses the internal knowledge-sharing approaches, tools, activities and organizational infrastructure in the United Nations Secretariat, focusing on knowledge networks supporting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

There is no common understanding of knowledge management or knowledge sharing in the Secretariat, and knowledge and information are often confused. "Knowledge management" is typically associated with disseminating information, which is only part of knowledge sharing. That emphasis overlooks the critical role cross-organizational collaboration and peer interaction plays in effective knowledge sharing. Systematically connecting staff with each other's ideas, insights and experiences is the core of most successful knowledge-sharing activities outside the United Nations.

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Knowledge sharing in support of the MDGs is not sufficiently strategic, focused or well integrated with organizational objectives. Different departments take different approaches to internal knowledge sharing, which are mostly not systematic. The most common knowledge-sharing tools, such as e-mail, meetings and websites, while useful, do not work best in connecting staff seeking each other's insights, experiences and ideas. Information and knowledge sharing is not consistently integrated with daily work. Mechanisms and processes for capturing and transferring good practices, lessons learned and knowledge from departing staff are generally inadequate. Technology for knowledge sharing is generally available but not always used.

Many networks supporting the MDGs are personal and ad hoc. While important, they are only partially effective. Formal knowledge networks in the Secretariat form around a specific topic and share documents, link staff across organizational boundaries and enable them to ask for information and assistance. Knowledge networks with dedicated resources and staff encourage and sustain ongoing discussions among members, serve as a medium for sharing expertise in dealing with common problems and emergent issues and facilitate collaboration on common goals. While staff point to the positive impact of knowledge networks, such as improving efficiency, reducing duplication and improving work quality, direct measurement of network results is limited.

In the Secretariat, the knowledge-sharing culture is not always open, senior leadership support is limited, incentives and rewards are lacking, few organizational knowledge management strategies exist and there are minimal if any dedicated knowledge-sharing resources. However, staff interest in sharing knowledge around the MDGs is high, and departments are beginning to develop initiatives to support staff interest in using knowledge to do their jobs more effectively, including a new role for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. Various system-wide and Secretariat initiatives have the potential to enhance how the Organization manages its knowledge.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services makes six recommendations to the Secretary-General, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of Human Resource Management. They include: addressing specific issues in a system-wide knowledge management strategy, tasking the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing with developing a Secretariat knowledge-sharing strategy, developing a knowledge-sharing pilot project around report production, designating a dedicated Secretariat unit for facilitating and guiding knowledge sharing, incorporating knowledge sharing into the performance appraisal system and including a knowledge-sharing component in the staff development programme. Implementing those recommendations will make knowledge sharing more systematic and organized, integrate it with operations and better align the United Nations in supporting the achievement of the MDGs.

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I. Introduction

1. At its forty-fifth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) requested the Office of Internal Oversight Services to conduct a thematic evaluation of "Knowledge management networks in the pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration" (A/60/16 and Corr.1, para 186). The objective is to assess the knowledge-sharing approaches, tools, activities and organizational infrastructure in the United Nations Secretariat, particularly focusing on knowledge networks that support the goals of the Millennium Declaration. The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments and offices and their comments for the most part incorporated.

2. The present evaluation focuses on internal knowledge-sharing capacity and practices in the Secretariat.[1] Both "knowledge management" and "knowledge sharing" are used interchangeably and defined as the systematic creation, organization, storage and sharing of knowledge in order to better achieve organizational goals. The Office of Internal Oversight Services recognizes the crucial importance of knowledge sharing between the United Nations and its external partners. However, since a systematic and comprehensive evaluation of knowledge sharing within the Secretariat has never been conducted, the Office of Internal Oversight Services decided that a review of internal knowledge management should precede a future broader assessment of external knowledge management.

3. The present evaluation examines how Secretariat entities share knowledge within and between themselves, both generally and within the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It does not include an assessment of knowledge sharing with external partners (although some networks assessed include both internal and external members) and does not examine capacity-building of Member States in knowledge management. While the focus of the evaluation is on the Secretariat, for comparative purposes the Office of Internal Oversight Services also reviewed knowledge sharing at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).[2]

II. Methodology

4. The Office of Internal Oversight Services utilized the following eight evaluation methods:[3] (1) a self-administered survey of 26 Secretariat departments/programmes;[4] (2) a self-administered survey of a non-random sample of 51 divisions/subprogrammes whose work addresses the MDGs;[5] (3) 48 interviews

[1] "Internal" is defined as within and between programmes.

[2] The Office of Internal Oversight Services consulted with the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) during the conduct of the evaluation. It plans to assess knowledge management in the specialized agencies in 2006.

[3] The Office of Internal Oversight Services was assisted by a knowledge management expert.

[4] Referred to as the "Department survey" in the report. The survey was conducted from October to November 2005. Of 26 Departments/programmes surveyed, 23 responded. See the annex to the present document for all departments/programmes surveyed.

[5] Referred to as the "Division survey" in the report. The survey was conducted from October to November 2005. Of 51 Divisions/subprogrammes surveyed, 31 responded.

with staff from all 26 Secretariat programmes, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Office, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Secretariat, the United Nations Staff College, the World Bank, USAID and the Millennium Project; (4) a benchmarking of knowledge-sharing good practices;[6] (5) an analysis of programme data in the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS) and the Performance Appraisal System (ePas); (6) assessments of three different knowledge networks; (7) a review of knowledge-sharing tools and mechanisms;[7] and (8) a desk review of relevant literature. Knowledge sharing in the Secretariat was benchmarked against acknowledged knowledge leaders from both the public and private sectors.

5. The methodology has several limitations. The evaluation is not a comprehensive assessment of all United Nations knowledge-sharing mechanisms and practices, and focuses primarily on those of greatest relevance to the MDGs; nor does it provide a credible inventory of all current knowledge management networks in the Secretariat owing to the wide diversity in how "knowledge network" is defined by its different entities.

III. Background

Knowledge management

6. Over the last two decades, organizations have viewed knowledge as a core asset and paid closer attention to how they develop, organize, store, share and use knowledge. Many develop a knowledge management strategy[8] that typically outlines how the organization:

- Communicates knowledge about programmes and projects within and outside the organization
- Connects staff interested in cross-cutting topics to share ideas, help each other and move the organization's understanding of those topics forward
- Learns from projects and make that learning accessible to people in other parts of the organization
- Captures and organizes critical knowledge of staff as they transfer or retire
- Ties knowledge sharing to organizational goals
- Deepens and develops knowledge critical to the organization's success.

Knowledge networks

7. Knowledge networks are crucial to many successful knowledge management strategies.[9] A knowledge network is broadly defined as a group of people sharing ideas and information around a specific topic and as the structures and relationships

[6] The Office of Internal Oversight Services benchmarked two not-for-profit and three for-profit organizations formally recognized as knowledge management leaders.

[7] Including websites, CD-ROMS and databases.

[8] While all organizations develop and distribute knowledge, a knowledge management strategy attempts to be more intentional and coordinated in that approach.

[9] The American Productivity and Quality Center, *Building and Sustaining Communities of Practice*, 2000.

allowing staff to brainstorm and create innovations. There are different types of networks in most organizations, ranging from personal networks to formal strategic knowledge networks.

8. All organizations have personal networks of individuals sharing ideas and helping each other with common work problems. Such networks have no focus, boundaries or sense of common identity, but are an important resource for professionals to find peers who can provide information or assist with work issues. They survive as long as individuals stay connected with each other.

9. Either spontaneously or deliberately, personal networks can merge around a common topic and evolve into knowledge networks with common domains and membership boundaries. Members share a common interest in the topic, help each other to solve problems and share documents, ideas and insights. Ideally, knowledge networks become fully integrated into the organization, with dedicated resources and staff, a strategy, special projects, incentives for member contributions and goals and deliverables. Active members develop a strategy for their domain and influence policy and practice. Ultimately, effective knowledge networks and their organizations demand greater coherence between network activities and results and the governance and operations of the organization.

10. Although knowledge networks might look like teams or other traditional work units, three characteristics distinguish them from those units:

- Networks are peer groups in which knowledge, not authority, reigns. Members use their knowledge and expertise to argue for a particular point of view.
- Networks cross organizational boundaries without replacing the work of other organizational units. They influence those units to use the tools, ideas and insights they develop but have no authority to enforce compliance.
- Networks have the space to deal with emergent problems and needs of members, rallying to help members solve technical issues.

11. While all types of networks have value, robust strategic knowledge networks are at the heart of many organizations' knowledge management because they are effective in crossing institutional boundaries and taking responsibility for achieving organizational goals. Typically not open to the public, knowledge networks can create a "safe" space in which members can deliberate problems, ask for help, and propose ideas without concern about being responsible for their soundness.

Knowledge as a core asset in support of MDGs

12. The United Nations Millennium Declaration sets out eight specific, time-bound goals to be met by 2015. In 2005, the Secretary-General reported on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those of the Millennium Declaration, stressing that the United Nations development agenda "cuts across a vast array of interlinked issues ranging from gender equality, social integration, health, employment, education, the environment and population to human rights, finance and governance", and that "there is clearly a need to build stronger and more systematic synergies between agencies with varying capacities of

normative and strategic functions".[10] The effective utilization of a primary United Nations asset — its knowledge — is critical to meeting the broader development agenda. Information in the form of reports and other documents, combined with the research, analysis and expertise of staff, are among the primary resources the Secretariat uses to facilitate progress towards the MDGs. The challenge remains to systematically and efficiently develop, organize, share and integrate knowledge to achieve those cross-cutting goals.

IV. Evaluation findings

A. There is no common understanding of knowledge management or knowledge sharing in the Secretariat, and knowledge and information are often confused

Understanding of knowledge management

13. Knowledge management and knowledge sharing are perceived differently by different Secretariat entities. Departments and Divisions have widely varying levels of sophistication in their understanding of knowledge management and its role and importance in the United Nations. Most survey respondents report that there is no common definition of knowledge management in their Department or Division. The few definitions offered range conceptually from the sharing of documents and information to the structured capture, organization and storage of individual and group knowledge. Even within a single Department, those terms can have different meanings. For example, knowledge management is described as working on joint projects in one Division and as networking and sharing ideas in another Division in the same Department.

Knowledge and information

14. As recognized by knowledge management experts, knowledge is more than information.[11] Knowledge includes information but also incorporates ideas, experience, insights and awareness of "who's who" in an organization. In knowledge-based organizations, knowledge is typically thought to include informal advice, help with common problems, best practices and learning from other projects, only a small portion of which is documented. Much of this knowledge is tacit and travels across organizational boundaries through connections built in knowledge networks.

Knowledge as broadcast information

15. Many Secretariat staff describe "knowledge management" as a matter of broadcasting information in traditional, albeit often electronic ways. Consistent with that connotation, knowledge-sharing activities typically consist of posting information to a website or distributing information through reports or e-mail lists.

[10] See *Towards achieving internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration* (E/2005/56) summary and para. 96.

[11] Thomas H. Davenport and Laurence Prusak, *Working Knowledge*, pp. 1-6, Harvard Business School Press, 1998. Richard McDermott, "How Information Technology Inspired, But Cannot Deliver Knowledge Management", *California Management Review*, 41/4, 1999.

Understanding knowledge management to be primarily about information broadcasting is common in other organizations at the early stages of their knowledge management development. That understanding neglects other critical components of knowledge sharing, such as peer collaboration.

16. There are significant limitations to broadcasting information as a primary form of knowledge sharing. First, since published information is broadly available, it encourages publication of completed work rather than work in progress, and therefore may inhibit collaboration and consultation during document creation. Also, that strategy leaves it up to individuals or their organizations to determine what ideas, insights and guidelines to adopt and therefore fails to provide a wider forum for the give-and-take discussions required to create consensus on good practices, lessons learned and guidelines on issues crossing organizational boundaries. The limitations of information broadcasting as a knowledge management strategy are therefore especially significant to achieving the MDGs, given their cross-cutting and system-wide relevance.

17. The strong emphasis on information broadcasting in the Secretariat leads at times to overwhelming amounts of information. The time and effort needed to filter through all available information is not always cost effective. Both department and division survey respondents report that, on average, they spend about one third of their time on a typical work day looking for and obtaining knowledge. Staff interviewed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services point out that too much information, when not focused, can be distracting.

Articulation of knowledge management in the Secretariat

18. The Office of Internal Oversight Services did not discern a senior leadership vision for strengthening knowledge management in the Organization, despite being described in various documents as an important activity. For example, the Secretary-General's report entitled "Information and communication technologies for development: progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/295" states that in order for "the system to develop greater coherence in ... programme support within the broader framework of its Millennium Development Goals agenda, it must, first and foremost, be able to create, manage and share information and knowledge across the system more efficiently and effectively" (see A/59/563, para. 7). In an interview with iSeek on 22 December 2005, the Under-Secretary-General for Management acknowledged the importance of knowledge sharing but stated that the Secretariat has more to do in that area.

19. At programme and staff levels, knowledge management and knowledge sharing are minimally discussed. Out of 26,716 individual performance appraisal work plans in ePAS from 2001 to 2005, 741 made reference to "knowledge sharing", "knowledge management", "knowledge building" or "information management", representing just 3 per cent of ePAS work plans over four years. There are, however, more references to "collaboration", which is referenced 3,778 times (14 per cent of work plans). Furthermore, a search of the 2004-2005 programmes of work in IMDIS found only 128 references to similar terms, representing just 26 of over 192 subprogrammes. Examples include programme objectives for more efficient utilization of information and knowledge resources and networks in support of Africa's development (ECA subprogramme on harnessing information for development) and an objective for improved capacity of member

countries to share knowledge on energy, land and water-borne transport and infrastructure (ECLAC subprogramme on natural resources and infrastructure). Lastly, knowledge management and knowledge sharing are identified as competencies in the Office of Human Resources Management *Profile of an Effective Manager* and as a component in its *Profile of an Effective Department*, although they are discussed under broader categories of "Technical/substantive competence" and "Well-managed resources", respectively.

B. Current knowledge sharing in support of the Millennium Development Goals is not well focused, sufficiently strategic or well integrated with organizational objectives

Knowledge needs for supporting the MDGs

20. The Millennium Declaration has created knowledge needs among Secretariat staff but has not uniformly enhanced their access to the needed knowledge. Survey respondents report that in order to support the MDGs, staff most commonly need substantive knowledge about different development topics, statistical data, good practice information and region-specific knowledge. However, respondents say that staff members face gaps regarding expert knowledge, knowledge on available staff expertise and experience, knowledge about what other Departments and Divisions are doing, country-specific information and information specific to the MDGs.

Knowledge-sharing approach

21. The Office of Internal Oversight Services did not identify any single or consistent approach to how knowledge is shared internally in the Secretariat. Departments utilize a combination of different mechanisms and are at varied stages regarding their development as knowledge-based institutions. That lack of a common, systematic approach is exemplified by how survey respondents describe knowledge sharing within their Department or Division. Within Departments, knowledge sharing is largely described as being informal and ad hoc; only 7 of 23 respondents say knowledge sharing within their Department is systematic. Between departments, knowledge most commonly takes place through formal mechanisms, but only 4 of 23 respondents say that is systematic. Within Divisions, just over half of respondents say knowledge sharing within the Division is systematic; however, far fewer (just 13 per cent) say it is systematic between Divisions in the same Department.

22. Overall, the Office of Internal Oversight Services determined that knowledge sharing tends to be stronger and more effective within divisions than within and between Departments. That may be due in part to staff reliance on traditional means of knowledge sharing with immediate colleagues and the tendency to work in small teams within a single unit. However, since supporting the MDGs requires organization-wide collaboration, that paradigm must change. The Millennium Declaration agenda has focused and defined work programmes, but has not yet led to accompanying new strategies and mechanisms for system-wide knowledge sharing.

Knowledge-sharing tools

23. Secretariat staff use various tools to share knowledge with their colleagues, most of which are simple and do not facilitate a process of dynamic collaboration between peer groups. Most survey respondents report daily use of e-mail (the most commonly used tool), telephone, teleconferences and meetings, and at least weekly use of internal and other United Nations websites and iSeek. Other tools used for knowledge sharing include newsletters, staff meetings and databases. More interactive tools, such as electronic discussion boards, instant messaging and web conferences, are reportedly used only by a minority of Secretariat staff.

24. Websites are often described as an important vehicle for sharing knowledge. They cover a broad range of topics and are commonly used to disseminate information related to the MDGs. An Office of Internal Oversight Services review of websites found them to be generally accessible, informative and easy to navigate; they contain useful, timely and relevant information. However, there is no index of all Millennium Declaration-related websites, no common structure and no guides for users on how to effectively search and use those sites. Furthermore, few of the websites accommodate the sharing of immediate (emergency) knowledge, and they do not typically facilitate peer-to-peer interactions and connections.

25. The Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that the most commonly used tools encourage certain types of behaviour but discourage others. They encourage the publishing of information but do not foster collaboration among colleagues. They also do not facilitate an important component of knowledge creation — the opportunity to think, to reflect and to deepen expertise. Fewer than half of survey respondents agree that staff take the time to meet and reflect with their team on what went wrong and what could be done better after completion of an assignment.

Staff connections

26. Strategic knowledge sharing connecting the people who need each other's insights, experience and ideas does not occur routinely and systematically in the Secretariat. For example, while it is possible to find staff contact information on iSeek, there is no central repository on staff technical expertise, work activities and experience. That is particularly vital to achieving the MDGs, since staff in different parts of the Secretariat and other United Nations entities work on the same issues, albeit in a normative, analytical or operational capacity. The Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that the value of staff collaboration is to obtain multiple points of view, to encourage collaborative thinking around common problems, to learn from peer experience and to reduce redundancy. Mechanisms, such as knowledge networks, are needed to enable that to occur.

Integration of knowledge sharing into work activities

27. Information and knowledge on the MDGs is not consistently integrated with daily work processes. The Office of Internal Oversight Services observed that processes for contributing knowledge are not seamlessly integrated into work activities. One example is typical report production, where knowledge sharing with peers is often an ancillary and not a core part of the work process. While experts acknowledge that it is impossible to truly "manage" knowledge, the goal of effective knowledge management is to improve work performance. Other organizations with more advanced knowledge management have demonstrated that a systematic

approach to harnessing knowledge, with tools, mechanisms and practices structured around daily work processes and organizational goals, has a noticeable impact.

28. Staff report limitations in their ability to tap into the Organization's knowledge assets. Only a minority of department survey respondents agree that staff routinely ask how they can leverage their knowledge in other areas, close to half say that the Organization does poorly with integrating knowledge sharing into day-to-day work and fewer than half believe that staff can identify colleagues who can benefit from their knowledge. The Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that limited integration of knowledge-sharing activities with work processes is one of the biggest challenges to knowledge sharing in the Secretariat. That situation contrasts with the practices of other knowledge-based institutions, which have established regular mechanisms for leveraging knowledge to improve performance, such as building a common work space where staff can post urgent requests for knowledge that they then apply to overcome immediate problems.

Knowledge sharing guidelines

29. The Office of Internal Oversight Services identified few specific guidelines and standards for the effective storage, dissemination and utilization of knowledge, and none that were Secretariat-wide; nor are there common standards regarding what, how and with whom knowledge should be shared. That is an obstacle to knowledge sharing.

Capture and dissemination of good practices and lessons learned

30. A further significant limitation in how knowledge is shared in the Secretariat is the lack of a consistent and efficient strategy for identifying, capturing, recording and disseminating good practices and lessons learned. Consequently, lessons learned often become lessons lost. Survey respondents report that staff are not likely to identify and share good practices and lessons learned within their Department or Division, nor are they likely to document the ideas, information and experiences that could be useful to others. They report only occasionally, rarely disseminating their expert knowledge. Evaluations are often a good source of lessons learned and good practices. Although all Departments are required to regularly evaluate their activities, that does not occur uniformly, and there is no central repository of Secretariat evaluation reports that staff can access and apply to their own work.

31. Organizations benchmarked by the Office of Internal Oversight Services have mechanisms in place for capturing and using that valuable knowledge asset. The Office believes that a common framework, based on established criteria, methodologies and protocols, is needed for getting good practices and lessons learned to the right people at the right time. Some Departments are making an effort to capture good practices and lessons learned. For example, UN-Habitat maintains a Best Practice Database on issues related to the MDGs that is shared with all stakeholders.

Capture and transfer of institutional knowledge

32. Another significant obstacle to Secretariat knowledge sharing is the lack of a systematic approach for capturing institutional knowledge when staff leave or retire. Experts agree that increased retirements cause lost knowledge, which affects organizational performance and whose costs are largely hidden. A large majority of

survey respondents say that issue is of great or moderate concern (most respondents at the Department level say it is of great concern). In one programme in the past year, all six senior managers retired within a few months, with no plans to systematically capture and transfer their expertise. The Office of Internal Oversight Services was not able to identify mechanisms for capturing institutional knowledge aside from formal exit interviews, handover notes, informal handover to replacements and overlapping time periods between new and departing staff. A more robust process involves three components: determining what expertise to capture, extracting that expertise and creating a structure for learning the expertise.

Current United Nations knowledge management initiatives

33. Three initiatives have the potential to facilitate a more systematic and strategic approach to knowledge sharing in the Organization. The first, the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing, led by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, was created to develop a Secretariat knowledge-sharing agenda.[12] The Office of Internal Oversight Services endorses plans to expand membership of the Task Force by including other substantive Departments and to encourage senior staff membership. However, the Office of Internal Oversight Services believes the Task Force is constrained by its current placement in the United Nations Information and Communications Technology Board since it implies overemphasis on technology.

34. The second, the CEB Task Force on Knowledge Sharing, will be formed to develop a knowledge-sharing strategy for the United Nations system, focusing on information needs and devising a framework for inter-agency cooperation. Beginning with an assessment of the existing environment, the Task Force will determine the types of knowledge-sharing activities the system should engage in and develop a road map for implementing an overall cohesive strategy. The Office of Internal Oversight Services supports that approach and is hopeful that that effort will lead to the establishment of an overall coordinated approach to knowledge sharing in the United Nations.

35. The third, a pilot knowledge-sharing project of the UNDG Working Group on Knowledge Management, combines four organizational knowledge-sharing models around the topic of HIV/AIDS.[13] The project will be piloted in three regions by the end of 2006. The Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that it can play an important role in defining and implementing a more strategic and focused approach to knowledge sharing in support of the MDGs but notes that wider Secretariat involvement will be needed for it to be more effective.

[12] Current members are from the Dag Hammarskjold Library, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and Office of Human Resources Management and the Information Technology and Services Division in the Department of Management.

[13] The project includes a knowledge asset guided by UNFPA, knowledge networks guided by UNDP, an online document system guided by the World Health Organization (WHO) and a training module guided by UNICEF.

C. Many Secretariat networks are informal and personal, but formal knowledge networks supporting the MDGs provide benefits to network members and to the Organization

Understanding of knowledge networks

36. As with knowledge management, there is no common understanding across the Secretariat of a "knowledge network." When describing knowledge networks, staff often refer to informal personal networks, ad hoc in nature and haphazard. Others refer to more formal and structured networks bringing together staff working on similar topics and issues. In analysing the networks described by survey respondents, the Office of Internal Oversight Services discerned three categories: (1) personal networks; (2) knowledge networks without dedicated resources; and (3) knowledge networks with dedicated resources.

Personal networks

37. The Secretariat is laced with informal personal networks. Many staff participate in those networks without perceiving them to be "knowledge management". Personal networking as a primary means of connecting staff is typical of organizations at the early stages of their knowledge management development. However, those networks have limitations. Since they are limited to relationships people build, they are constrained by the connections staff make in their work and tend to be concentrated within single work units and geographic locations. Furthermore, personal networks are dependent on the degree to which individuals maintain their connections, and since they are not systemic, they slow down or stall when people leave.

Knowledge networks without dedicated resources

38. Some United Nations networks form around a topic rather than a personal relationship and are a forum in which staff working on similar issues share information, ideas and experiences. Members also share organizational goals common to the network topic. They are formal knowledge networks. Formal knowledge networks typically share the following characteristics:

- They are organized around a specific topic
- The topic is tied to a strategic organizational goal
- They have membership boundaries and a common agenda
- They organize documents and news related to their topic and make them accessible to members
- Members have a common identity with the network, reflected in their common website and a sense of obligation to respond to requests from other members
- Members can identify other network members and expect to receive replies to inquiries from members they do not personally know.

39. However, many Secretariat knowledge networks have no dedicated resources or facilitator and limited collaborative mechanisms. They therefore often have difficulty maintaining a robust community of practice over time. The Office of Internal Oversight Services noted several examples of such networks in the

Secretariat. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, which is chaired by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and supported by the Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. All gender focal points in the United Nations system are members. The network carries out its work through task forces on different topics, including one on the MDGs. It has an annual meeting in conjunction with the Commission on the Status of Women and intersessional meetings. Much work is carried out electronically, including through teleconferences. The Inter-Agency Network has a comprehensive website (WomenWatch) which provides information and direct links to all electronic information available on the gender equality work of the United Nations. The site can be used for online electronic discussions.

Knowledge networks with dedicated resources

40. A few knowledge networks have dedicated resources. In addition to the characteristics described in paragraph 38 above, the networks have the following components:

- They have an active and dedicated facilitator who takes responsibility for sustaining the network.
- They have a dedicated budget to administer the networks.
- They encourage ongoing, typically electronic, discussions among members, and monitor those discussions, providing a bounded space in which members are comfortable seeking information and assistance.
- They develop an overall network strategy.
- They have mechanisms for supporting collaborative interaction that break down knowledge silos.
- They distribute insights and ideas rapidly and cross-fertilize ideas to encourage innovation.

41. The Office of Internal Oversight Services noted few knowledge networks with dedicated resources in the Secretariat, including:[14]

- The UNDG MDG Network, which began in January 2002 originally to support United Nations country teams and Governments in producing high-quality MDG reports. Since then, the focus of the network has shifted to more general topics related to the Millennium Development Goals. The network hosts electronic discussions, research (including consolidated replies to discussions and news updates) and is managed by a full-time facilitator. It has over 2,000 members representing over 25 different United Nations entities.
- The Department of Peacekeeping Operations Rule of Law Network, which was created in 2005 to increase connectivity among staff working on rule of law issues in the peacekeeping, peace support or post-conflict context. Membership is limited to United Nations staff involved in rule of law issues. The network has a facilitator, who manages electronic discussions based on member queries and puts together consolidated responses. As of January 2006,

[14] The MDG Network, while not exclusively a Secretariat network, was included because Secretariat staff are members and it is particularly relevant to the evaluation topic.

the network had 188 members who ask questions of each other, exchange documents, experiences and feedback and access common resources such as databases.

42. With dedicated resources, the knowledge networks provide services which increase membership and foster greater knowledge sharing. They include providing translated consolidated replies to all network queries, cross-referencing the same topic on multiple networks and using expert guest moderators. The Rule of Law Network, for example, cross-posts queries with the UNDP Crisis Prevention and Recovery and Democratic Governance Networks. The UNDP Human Rights Network is now a United Nations-system network on the topic of applying a rights-based approach to development. The Office of Internal Oversight Services endorses those practices as facilitating greater inter-agency synergies in support of the Millennium Development Goals.

43. The Office of Internal Oversight Services notes issues related to knowledge networks warranting further consideration. They include: limited resources; the need for organizational culture and incentives to encourage open and honest dialogue; the tendency of few members to dominate discussions; uneven participation among regions and offices; debate on whether the focus of networks should be formulated "top down" or "bottom up"; lack of consensus on maximum membership size; how to approach governance and management when networks become very large; lack of management understanding and engagement in the networks; and debate on whether networks should include expert or practitioner knowledge or both. However, the Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that those are common issues in network development and other organizations have reached practicable resolutions.

Impact of United Nations networks

44. While Secretariat knowledge networks have done little to directly track their impact, members believe that they have had a positive impact on both participants and the Organization. Most survey respondents believe that knowledge networks improve efficiency, reduce time to solve problems, improve staff competence, reduce duplication and improve productivity and quality. However, the link between knowledge networks and organizational performance improvement is not always well defined; survey respondents offer few examples of the direct connection between networks and their impact. Studies have shown that organizations that directly measure intellectual capital are able to better align knowledge-sharing activities with business strategy, improve stakeholder communication and more effectively manage knowledge resources.[15]

45. Knowledge networks assessed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services have measured or will attempt to measure impact. The MDG Network conducted a user survey from November 2004 to January 2005 which found that more than half of members had contributed to the network and that a large majority rated it useful. Specific feedback included appreciation for the practical field experience shared, enrichment gained about Millennium Development Goals and high ratings in particular for the consolidated replies. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations Rule of Law Network will be reviewed in March 2006, but the growth and interest

[15] Optima Media Group, *Measuring knowledge and intellectual capital*, 2003.

in the network in the first six months since its launch is indicative of its usefulness to participants in sharing information, ideas and expertise on rule of law issues.

The future of knowledge networks in the Secretariat

46. The Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that personal networks will and should continue to play an important role in the Secretariat but are insufficient to support the degree of knowledge sharing needed for effective support of the Millennium Development Goals. Since staff understands that knowledge is an asset, are already networked through personal contacts and are interested in improving their knowledge use, knowledge networks have strong potential for the Secretariat. One staff member articulates their potential by stating that knowledge networks should move the agenda forward, enhance understanding and result in a better product. Effective knowledge networks help individuals to develop skills and competencies, provide ways to stay current and foster a sense of community with colleagues. For the Organization, they push strategy forward, enable faster problem solving and improve the process of finding, assembling and analysing experience, ideas and insights to support the Millennium Development Goals.

D. Organizational culture and infrastructure do not always facilitate knowledge sharing

Organizational culture

47. While commonly accepted that organizational culture must support and facilitate knowledge sharing, and that the right cultural values and norms are needed to encourage knowledge-sharing behaviour, the Office of Internal Oversight Services noted that such a culture does not consistently exist in the Secretariat. A majority of Department survey respondents rate the culture of sharing information and knowledge as only fair or poor, and most rate openness to sharing new ideas as fair or poor. Collaboration is also generally rated negatively. In contrast, the organizational culture at the Division level appears to be somewhat better. Over half of Division survey respondents rate the culture of sharing in their Division as excellent or good, while an even stronger majority say that openness to sharing new ideas and collaboration is equally strong.

Senior leadership support

48. Knowledge sharing must be supported by senior leaders who understand what it is and how it can be used to better the Organization. Cultural limitations and lack of leadership support are among the most serious challenges identified by survey respondents. Less than half of survey respondents say that senior leaders place a very high or high priority on knowledge management. Outside the United Nations, senior leadership support is key to effective knowledge sharing. At one major organization, the visible vision and endorsement of leadership regarding the crucial role of knowledge sharing, as well as the expectation that staff systematically share their knowledge, had a strong impact on staff behaviour. At another large multinational company, senior managers regularly review the goals and accomplishments of knowledge networks (one of the company's primary knowledge mechanisms), and express their appreciation of the networks and their expectations for their future goals, deliverables and contributions.

Incentives and rewards

49. The Office of Internal Oversight Services was unable to identify any systemic incentives or rewards for knowledge sharing in the Secretariat. All Department survey respondents and all but one Division survey respondents report that the system of incentives and rewards for knowledge sharing is inadequate. Furthermore, the report on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/59/85-E/2004/68) identified a lack of incentives and institutional reward systems to encourage entities to make their knowledge available system-wide as a significant constraint to utilizing the expertise of the entire United Nations system. That differs significantly from other organizational knowledge management practices, where knowledge sharing is acknowledged as an important organizational value and openly rewarded. Few Departments or sample Divisions have an explicit staff core competency or formal staff recognition for knowledge sharing that defines expectations for staff actively participating in knowledge-sharing activities.

Dedicated resources

50. The Secretariat devotes far fewer resources to knowledge sharing than the funds and programmes or private and public sector knowledge leaders. Nearly all Departments and Divisions surveyed lack a separate budget for knowledge management, and few have a dedicated unit or staff position with responsibility for knowledge sharing.[16] The Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that, given industry benchmarks, the lack of dedicated knowledge resources significantly impedes Secretariat progress in knowledge management. Such dedicated resources are needed to ensure that due attention and effort are given to conceptualizing, designing, implementing and maintaining knowledge-sharing systems and mechanisms, as well as guiding and facilitating their use.

Knowledge management strategies

51. Only 4 of 26 Departments and 11 of 31 of the sample Divisions report having an explicit strategy or policy for organizing, storing and sharing knowledge. Few are fully integrated into the department or divisional work programme or address sharing knowledge with other United Nations entities. As noted in paragraph 6 above, explicit strategies play a key role by defining knowledge-sharing expectations, frameworks, tools and links with work processes.

Organizational learning

52. Organizational learning around knowledge sharing is limited. Current Office of Human Resources Management training programmes for leadership, management and teamwork do not explicitly address knowledge sharing. The United Nations System Staff College has organized workshops and seminars on knowledge management strategies and techniques for specialized agencies, which included the participation of the World Bank and industry experts. The Office of Internal

[16] Three sections have "knowledge" in their title — the Knowledge Management Branch of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Knowledge Sharing Section of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in the Department of Public Information and the Knowledge Management Systems Section of the Development and New Technologies Service in the Department of Management.

Oversight Services believes that such efforts are important for staff learning, but more is needed to provide a forum for staff at all levels to understand how best to share and utilize knowledge in their work.

E. Some technology for knowledge sharing is available but not adequately utilized

Technological tools

53. Various technologies are available in the Secretariat to enhance knowledge sharing, but they are not commonly used. Staff can use instant messaging, which enables them to see who else is online and available anytime, and electronic discussion boards, although only a minority report doing so regularly. Furthermore, very few staff report using electronic tools designed specifically for knowledge management; they include Yahoo groups, Net meeting, eRoom, eCommunity, Sharepoint, Documentum and Sametime. Survey respondents believe that Information Technology (IT) systems for connecting to information are generally stronger than IT systems designed specifically to support knowledge sharing. Typically, IT applications needed to support knowledge sharing include search capability, threaded discussion capability, common platforms for storage and retrieval, collaborative work spaces, virtual communities of practice, an integrated library system, lessons learned repositories and databases to track staff skills and competencies. Knowledge leaders typically identify and endorse a standard suite of tools for integrating knowledge across the Organization.

Information Technology initiatives

54. Two ongoing IT initiatives have the potential to strengthen technological capacity for knowledge sharing. First, the Department of Management is developing an Electronic Content Management (ECM) platform that will incorporate e-management, knowledge sharing and services to intergovernmental bodies. The knowledge management component will establish common platforms for sharing knowledge and address how information is delivered. Second, under the guidance of CEB, a system-wide Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy is being developed as part of an overall effort to strengthen capacity to manage knowledge in order to maximize the support provided to countries in using ICT for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Role of information technology

55. The Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that the ICT function in the United Nations is an important enabler of knowledge, as it is in other knowledge-based organizations. In none of the organizations benchmarked by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, however, was knowledge management responsibility given solely to a technology unit (all have a separate and dedicated knowledge management office). In order to ensure an integrated approach incorporating content, ITC should work in conjunction with other enablers of knowledge management, including the library and human resource functions. Technological tools are leverage points for sharing knowledge and should be a part of a larger effort to change practices, processes and behaviours.

F. Staff interest in sharing knowledge around the Millennium Development Goals is high, and Departments are recognizing the need to do this more effectively with various knowledge-sharing initiatives

Staff interest in knowledge sharing

56. The Office of Internal Oversight Services noted strong staff interest in enhancing knowledge sharing and a common agreement that knowledge is a core asset of the United Nations. In both interviews and survey responses, staff stress that they want more information on how to better utilize knowledge to do their work in more innovative and effective ways. The Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that staff are open to the better use of knowledge and recognize that they use only a fraction of what is available since they are often too busy to make better use of knowledge assets. Many staff interviewed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services express interest in learning more about what others in the Organization are doing to effectively share knowledge. A majority of survey respondents say staff are willing to share information about what is happening in their substantive areas and to help each other solve common work issues and problems. Similarly, a majority rate staff willingness to ask for help as excellent or good.

Dag Hammarskjöld Library

57. In the Secretariat, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has been assigned the lead for knowledge management and is changing its role to meet that responsibility.[17] Following the slogan "from collections to connections", the Library has several initiatives to strengthen internal communication and knowledge sharing. Its Knowledge Sharing Section incorporates an Internal Communications Unit tasked with identifying more effective methods to communicate within the Secretariat and developing a strategy to ensure a systematic approach to the issue. The Unit redesigned iSeek in August 2005 to become a worldwide United Nations Intranet that connects staff with management, shares consistent messages, posts up-to-date information and connects staff with work tools. In 2005, the Library sponsored a lectures and conversations series that brought in leading experts to share their insights and experiences on different topics for audiences including United Nations staff and Member States. One seminar, with leading experts in the field, focused on knowledge management. Furthermore, the Library has a Personal Knowledge Management Programme designed to assist all United Nations staff members with maximizing tools and techniques for knowledge management. Specific activities include personal interviews to determine information and knowledge needs, personal coaching and team sessions. Since December 2005, 115 coaching sessions have been delivered.

Other knowledge-sharing initiatives

58. The Office of Internal Oversight Services noted other initiatives that tap into staff interest in sharing knowledge. While not exhaustive, the list includes the following:

[17] A proposal is being considered to call it the "Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge Sharing Centre".

- The Department of Peacekeeping Operations knowledge management tool kit incorporates a methodology as well as reporting and dissemination protocols for after-action reviews, end-of-assignment reports, handover notes and practice surveys (incorporating both good and bad practices as well as lessons learned). Those tools provide a common platform for capturing, codifying and disseminating knowledge gained from field and project experience

- ESCAP has endorsed knowledge management as an organizational initiative to help it to attain its three-pronged objective of managing globalization, reducing poverty and addressing emerging social issues. A knowledge management/ICT committee and its knowledge management task force are in place to develop a strategy for ESCAP with specific activities to be undertaken in the immediate and long term. With the assistance of UNDP, a workshop was held in March 2005

- The UN-Habitat mission roster provides information about all recent UN-Habitat missions and can be searched by various criteria, including staff member and mission country. By potentially connecting peers with similar knowledge needs and interests, it has a more collaborative component that could be further exploited

- ReliefWeb is a web-based information system for humanitarian response, administered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to strengthen the response capacity of the international humanitarian community through the rapid dissemination of reliable information on emergencies and disasters. The site received an average of 2.5 million page views per month in 2005, with major peaks in use after the South Asian 2004 tsunami and 2005 earthquake.

United Nations as a convener of knowledge

59. While outside the evaluation scope of internal knowledge sharing, an initiative of the United Nations country team in India is worth discussing for the noteworthy approach taken to knowledge sharing. Significantly, the project has helped to define a new role for the United Nations at the country level — from provider of development advice and financial support to knowledge convener. "Solution Exchange" is a knowledge-sharing project with the overall goal of problem-solving in support of India's development priorities that correspond to the Millennium Development Goals. It consists of 10 communities of development practitioners (working in the United Nations, Government and other institutions) formed around such topics as health, poverty, education and environment. Members engage in online discussions and exchanges, with a network moderator and researcher synthesizing each discussion to capture the knowledge shared as a documented product. The head of the relevant local United Nations entity acts as the community's convener, and a steering committee defines the agenda. The Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that that project could be replicated by regional commissions as well as by other country teams, with cross-cutting networks utilized for disseminating knowledge between countries.

Measurement of knowledge sharing

60. The measurement of knowledge-sharing tools and activities is important in obtaining greater organizational support and buy-in. Only one Department reports

measuring the impact of its internal knowledge-sharing activities. While measurement of knowledge sharing is difficult, with no agreed-upon comprehensive methodology, there are indicators of knowledge sharing that can be used to gauge performance. The World Bank considered the three main benefits of its knowledge sharing to be the greater speed of service, enhanced quality of work and greater innovation. Other benefits of knowledge sharing reported by survey respondents include a significant or moderate impact on increasing work efficiency, reducing duplication, improving quality, introducing new work methods and approaches and improving staff competence. While admittedly self-reported, those benefits are proxy measures of the positive impact of knowledge-sharing activities.

G. The World Bank, UNDP and UNFPA offer models for advancing knowledge-sharing in the Secretariat

Knowledge-sharing models

61. Knowledge sharing in the World Bank, UNDP and UNFPA is more advanced than in the Secretariat. All three take a systematic and strategic approach to managing their knowledge, although using different models. The Office of Internal Oversight Services sees merit in each one, recognizing that they offer advantages and limitations. The Secretariat must use a model that best fits its knowledge needs, organizational goals and cultural norms.

Knowledge sharing in the World Bank

62. Following a clear and distinct senior leadership vision, the World Bank has taken steps to transform itself into a knowledge leader. Building on the premise that fighting poverty requires a global knowledge-sharing strategy, sharing at the Bank is about "making this knowledge readily accessible to a wide audience internally and externally, and creating linkages between groups and communities working on similar topics".[18] The Bank intentionally focused first on its internal knowledge sharing before turning to external knowledge sharing, and has also shifted from an early emphasis on capturing and organizing knowledge to adopting, adapting and applying knowledge to help staff and partners work more effectively to reduce poverty. Current knowledge-sharing programmes include knowledge networks, help desk and advisory services, knowledge collections on the web, "tacit" knowledge debriefings and a platform to share knowledge with the development community through the Development Gateway website. According to World Bank staff, several factors were key in turning the Bank into a knowledge leader: strong leadership, a compelling business case, enthusiastic and dedicated knowledge champions, organizational communication on knowledge management activities, financial incentives and recognition in employee performance.

63. Limitations to knowledge sharing at the World Bank illustrate the challenges faced by the Secretariat. According to a World Bank evaluation, three main challenges are: linking knowledge sharing more directly with the Bank's core operational work; capturing lessons learned and good practices more systematically; and strengthening content management to ensure quality and operational

[18] World Bank Knowledge Sharing pamphlet, http://www.worldbank.org/ks.

relevance.[19] The evaluation identified two major shortcomings of the Bank's knowledge strategy — the lack of an adequate plan for transitioning from building and championing new knowledge-sharing tools to mainstreaming the tools and the lack of mechanisms to benchmark effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.

Knowledge sharing in UNDP

64. UNDP has focused its knowledge sharing around five development practice areas. They bring together staff from different offices into voluntary, flexible communities that inform members about new activities, share experiences and good practices and facilitate discussion of substantive issues. Linked primarily by an electronic network, they are also supported by face-to-face meetings and other activities. A standardized product called a "consolidated reply" is provided within an average of 10 days after each electronic discussion of a topic, synthesizing expertise and experience around that topic. UNDP has 20 current networks, 4 open to non-UNDP staff. The networks are assessed through an annual headquarters products and services survey, and in 2004, 92 per cent of staff members reported that participation in a network benefited their office, while 86 per cent stated that it benefited their professional development. In 2004, the networks were reviewed by an independent panel of knowledge experts, who commended the networks' energy and responsiveness.

65. UNDP regional offices also have knowledge teams that build staff capacity, act as a regional hub in collecting, organizing and disseminating knowledge, design knowledge products, advise staff on tools and platforms and develop regional networks. The Bangkok regional office hosted a "knowledge fair" in which different entities set up booths to display and share their knowledge products and the Johannesburg regional office is looking at indigenous methods of knowledge sharing, such as story telling.

66. UNDP acknowledged a need to better mainstream its knowledge management into its business processes and developed a formal knowledge management strategy in 2004. The subsequent shift away from a "bottom-up" to a more "top-down" approach has led to ongoing debate within the organization about the right knowledge model to meet its goals.

Knowledge sharing in UNFPA

67. The integrated approach to knowledge sharing in UNFPA is about staff interaction, guided by organizational processes and enabled by technology. Its cornerstone is the Knowledge Asset Development System. Knowledge assets are "living repositories of collective know-how" and are developed around specific issues. Each asset: contains distilled experiential knowledge; is based on work processes; presents information in a question-and-answer format; links to examples and further reading; has links to experts for additional guidance; and is developed, updated and supported by a network of staff. Since 2004, UNFPA launched nine knowledge assets on priority topics such as sexual and reproductive health and human rights based approach to programming. Their primary audience is UNFPA country office staff. UNFPA also has a knowledge-sharing strategy, a dedicated knowledge unit and budget, a knowledge-sharing competency for all staff, templates

[19] *Sharing Knowledge: Innovations and Remaining Challenges*, Operations Evaluation Department, 2003.

for collecting lessons learned and DocuShare, an Internet-based repository of internal and external resources and publications.

68. UNFPA faces challenges in its knowledge management programme. While knowledge assets have been built around work processes, UNFPA has not yet been able to conclusively demonstrate if they have improved performance. Further, while a staff knowledge sharing core competency has been important in signalling organizational values around knowledge sharing, staff say the competency and its measurement are still not adequately defined.

V. Conclusion

69. The Office of Internal Oversight Services identified significant limitations in how the Secretariat develops, captures, shares and uses one of its core assets — its knowledge. Recognizing that the ultimate goal of knowledge sharing is to improve organizational performance, the Secretariat needs to harness its knowledge assets more efficiently and effectively. It needs to become a world class knowledge leader, one with senior leadership vision and support, adequate tools, systems, mechanisms, and resources, an organizational culture that encourages knowledge-sharing behaviours and a strategy that integrates knowledge sharing with everyday work practices. Successful knowledge sharing fosters innovation, promotes trust and improves decision-making. The Secretariat needs to maximize knowledge sharing through maximizing connectivity — letting people know what others know and how they can use that to perform better in their own jobs — and creating norms and values that encourage the sharing of knowledge. While dedicated resources are essential, knowledge sharing must eventually be seen as everybody's business.

70. Given the breadth of the Millennium Declaration, knowledge sharing is crucial to crossing organizational boundaries and integrating the normative, analytical and operational work of the Organization. Robust knowledge networks with genuine resources and support have strong potential for facilitating such inter-agency synergies. According to Secretariat staff, the most effective way to improve knowledge sharing in support of the Millennium Development Goals is to create greater harmonization and coordination among knowledge-sharing practices and to systematize knowledge sharing across the Organization. Knowledge sharing in the Secretariat needs to be about connecting staff with the right knowledge to their peers who need and use the knowledge, by taking an integrated approach incorporating information content, technology and people. Finally, the Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that any efforts to enhance knowledge sharing must be strongly linked to organizational reform.

VI. Recommendations

71. Based on the evaluation findings, the Office of Internal Oversight Services makes the following six recommendations. Some are directed at existing initiatives to strengthen knowledge sharing both at the Secretariat and system-wide level. The recommendations have been agreed to by clients but with some decisions regarding reporting lines and governance deferred to reform resulting from the report of the Secretary-General "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/692 and Corr.1).

A. Knowledge-sharing strategy

Recommendation 1

72. **The Chief Executives Board**, when developing a United Nations system-wide knowledge management strategy, should specifically address the following issues (in addition to those already spelled out in the Terms of Reference for its Task Force on Knowledge Sharing):

(a) A common understanding of what knowledge sharing entails and why it is important;

(b) A clear taxonomy for different types of knowledge networks and the role played by each type of network, encouraging movement where possible to more strategic, focused and cross-cutting organizational networks;

(c) A shift in focus from knowledge sharing as primarily broadcasting information to a combination of information, collaboration and peer interactions;

(d) A strategy for integrating knowledge sharing more fully into work processes. To the extent possible, the strategy should use the results of the pilot knowledge-sharing project discussed in recommendation 4 below.

Recommendation 2

73. **The Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing** should develop a Secretariat-wide knowledge strategy, in conjunction with the system-wide strategy being developed by the CEB and concurrently with the reform process and organizational change initiatives. The strategy should in particular promote the role of knowledge networks in strengthening knowledge sharing within the Secretariat and with external partners, developing a model and methodology for how those networks can best work. In doing that, the Task Force may want to look at the knowledge-sharing model being piloted by the UNDG Knowledge Management Working Group. The Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that the reporting lines for the Task Force will be decided in the course of the ongoing reform resulting from the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform (A/60/692 and Corr.1). The Office of Internal Oversight Services trusts that a decision on reporting lines will not be delayed.

B. Knowledge-sharing pilot project

Recommendation 3

74. **The Department of Economic and Social Affairs**, as a major author Department of Secretariat reports in the economic and social areas and convener of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, should conduct a pilot project on further integrating knowledge sharing in the report production process, with a view to determining the utility, costs, limitations and results of more effective knowledge sharing. The Department should review the current production process for one or more specific reports and identify key points where broader knowledge sharing could occur. The pilot project should result in developing a methodology for further integrating knowledge sharing in daily work processes in order to improve the quality and production speed of reports. The Department should consult with the

CEB and Secretariat Task Forces on Knowledge Sharing in implementing the project.

C. Dedicated knowledge-sharing office

Recommendation 4

75. **The Secretary-General** should designate a dedicated unit for knowledge sharing in the Secretariat. The overall role of the Section should be to encourage, facilitate and guide knowledge sharing in the Secretariat and to ensure consistency, coordination and harmonization among Secretariat tools, activities and mechanisms. The Section should be provided with necessary resources for adequately fulfilling its new responsibilities. In collaboration with the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing, as well as the Office of Human Resources Management and the Information Technology and Services Division, the Section should be tasked with:

(a) Developing a common knowledge-sharing tool kit;

(b) Providing guidance and support to knowledge networks;

(c) Developing guidelines on knowledge sharing;

(d) Developing a strategy for systematically gathering and utilizing the knowledge of staff leaving the United Nations, using protocols that are more systematic and effective than current methods;

(e) Developing common tools and protocols for capturing and disseminating good practices and lessons learned;

(f) Creating and maintaining a Secretariat knowledge-sharing website with guidance, tools, good practices and tips.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that the location of this unit will be decided in the course of the ongoing reform resulting from the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform (A/60/692). The Office of Internal Oversight Services trusts that a decision on its location will not be delayed.

D. Human resource initiatives

Recommendation 5

76. **The Office of Human Resources Management** should make knowledge sharing a more explicit and stronger component of the performance appraisal system. It should identify the most relevant knowledge management competencies discussed in the *United Nations Profile of an Effective Manager* and incorporate them into performance appraisal systems for all staff. Knowledge sharing could be addressed more directly in human resource action plans, as well as in individual staff work plans and performance assessments.

Recommendation 6

77. **The Office of Human Resources Management** should address knowledge management more directly and explicitly as a topic in its staff development programme. That should include training in knowledge management concepts, mechanisms, tools and practices. A knowledge-sharing component should be specifically introduced into existing courses for leadership, management and organizational development, as well as into teamwork training programmes.

(*Signed*) Inga-Britt **Ahlenius**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

Annex

Programmes/Departments surveyed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Department of Management

Department of Political Affairs

Department of Public Information

Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Economic Commission for Europe

Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

International Trade Centre

Office of Humanitarian Affairs

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

Office of Human Resources Management

Office of Internal Oversight Services

Office of Legal Affairs

Office of Outer Space Affairs

Office of the Special Adviser on Africa

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East